

Comparing Arguments about Fossils

Directions: Read through the students' writing and underline the reasoning in each argument. Afterwards, rank the students' arguments from strongest (1) to weakest (4).

Student A

I think the fossil tooth came from a prehistoric shark. The fossil tooth is sharp and it is off white. The end of the fossil tooth has a curve until it meets at a point. Scientists found the fossil tooth in sandstone, which is a type of sedimentary rock. Therefore, it came from a prehistoric shark, which is related to sharks that live today.

Student B

The fossil tooth came from a prehistoric shark. The fossil tooth was found in sandstone, which is a type of sedimentary rock. Sedimentary rock is usually found near bodies of water, such as oceans, which is where sharks live. Also, because the fossil tooth is sharp it must have come from a carnivore. Sharks are carnivores, which means they eat meat. Sharp teeth help tear through meat, which is easily digestible.

Student C

The fossil tooth was found in sandstone, which is a type of sedimentary rock. Sandstone is an important type of rock. Because the fossil tooth was found in sandstone, it came from a prehistoric shark. Also, the fossil tooth is sharp. Because of the shape of the fossil tooth, I know it came from a prehistoric shark.

Student D Prehistoric shark.

The fossil tooth came from a prehistoric shark, which is related to sharks that live today. The fossil tooth was found in sandstone, which is a type of sedimentary rock. Sedimentary rocks are formed when air, wind, ice or water deposit smaller pieces of rocks (called sediments) in a location. I also think this fossil tooth came from a prehistoric shark because it is sharp. Current day sharks are carnivores, which means they only eat meat.